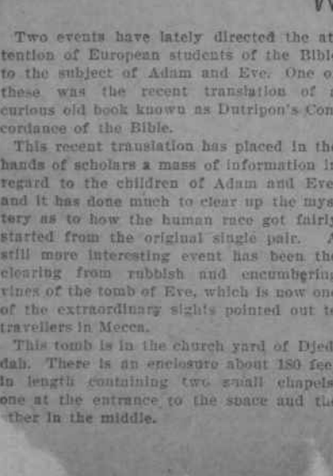
A STUDY of an ACTRESS — OLGA NETHERSOLE — BY ALAN DALE

PARTING is such sweet sorrow. In the theatrical world, however, a certain resignation is easy to find. The tearful "adieu" is frequently nothing more than a cunning little "au revoir" that has the effective ring of dramatic advertisement in it. Gilead hath its balm, and nothing but death—or bad business—can rob a community permanently of its pampered star.

Olga Nethersole is going across the bounding blue, not to secure costumes, or plays, or actors, or recreation, but to stay there for a few seasons, and cast herself upon the troubled London waters.

She is going to "take a theatre" (the expression suggests that all she has to do is to stretch out her hand and help herself), produce plays (there is nothing easier than producing plays) and show the Londoners what America has done for her—or perhaps I should say what she has done for America. It will not be an altogether enviable task, but the tempestuous, ardor-tossed Olga is not seeking the velvet couch of luxurious indolence. She loves her work with a ferocious, tigress-like affection, and no Joan of Arc ever believed more assuredly that she has a mission



here below than does Miss Nethersole.

However, I am not going to waste pen and ink on Miss Nethersole's views of art, and all that sort of fol-de-rol. Those views must be high-falutin enough, goodness knows, to scare the ordinary bread-and-butter multitude. Nor do I propose forwarding to Miss Olga's stateroom a statement of our indebtedness to her sublime art. We owe her nothing whatsoever, and I am perfectly convinced that, in her opinion, she owes us less. Miss Nethersole returns to her muttons with an almost phenomenally inflated head. She has been utterly spoiled in this indulgent country, and the reaction will set in the very instant that she establishes herself in the selfish midst of the London public.

It is scarcely three years since this star loomed up in our centre on the crest of a big foamy billow of advertisement. She had been favorably known in London as a "promising" actress, and one of London's critics who adapted a play for her, and wanted her to succeed in it—for purely unselfish reasons, of course—gave her the freedom of his fluent and adjectival pen. You all remember that dreadful time at Palmer's Theatre when Olga did "The Transgressor" and masticated the scenery before our very eyes; how she almost tore poor Wilton Lackaye's wig from his reverent head, and how she gurgled and splashed and ranted through a most exhausting evening.

It was a doleful position in which the critics found themselves, but, if I remember rightly, they wrote around it in a plausible manner, and nobly let concealment, like a worm i' the bud, prey on their damask cheeks. But Olga—who in those days was a clever woman with an eye to the main chance—saw that she had been quite mistaken in her estimate of New York. She realized that the audiences at Palmer's were not cowboys and cowgirls. She saw that they looked clean and spruce, and almost intelligent, and she changed her tactics like a flash. In "Camille" we all took off our hats to her, and bowed so low that we never really rose again. I know that I felt particularly abject. I had slated "The Transgressor" ferociously and had held out no hopes for amendment. And then in "Camille" Miss Nethersole was so unexpectedly delightful, so moving, so wholly artistic, that—that—well, there was really nothing to do but grovel, and eat large doses of dust. We all ate dust. We ate it so gluttonously that Miss Nethersole winked the other eye, and saw her advantage. The spoiling process began, and it has continued ever since.

"Carmen" was another evil thing for Nethersole. Perhaps I am to blame in the matter, but really, as a slave of the public, I am bound to consider the public rather than the actors and actresses I am called upon to view. When I saw Olga pour her molten kisses into young Leicester's eyes and ears and nose and lips, I said to myself: "Ha! Ha! Here's a good subject." Of course, that was an evil, journalistic way of looking at it. I should have blinked at the kisses, and alluded in soggy, doughy paragraphs to high art and dramatic aspirations, and the future of the drama, as well as to its past. I know I should have done all this, but the flesh is weak. "Carmen" was a huge success, and the kiss did it. The Empire was packed to overflowing at evening and matinee performances. The kiss travelled all over the United States, and then went to England, where I met it last Summer, a trifle damp and depressed from long travel, but still vital. Miss Nethersole was puffed and paragraphed and interviewed, all on account of that poor little kiss. There is nothing like newspaper notoriety to inflame the "ego" of the actor and actress. One little dose, and the appetite is awakened. It rushes forward like an avalanche, and the result is invariably destructive. Miss Nethersole was pinnacled as a startling novelty after "Carmen" had run a week. The shock was too much for her. She never recovered. Her imagination was affected. She believed herself to be a sort of compound of Bernhardt and Duse, and the real, artistic value of her performances has vanished.

Miss Nethersole ripened too quickly. She got to the top of the ladder without using the rungs that lead to it, and when the was up aloft she turned round and cried to us, "Behold your Olga! Your Olga is great! Your Olga knows it, and your Olga wont come down!"

It was funny at first. It is always amusing to see a spoiled child "bossing the show," as the rude slang phrase has it. But parents with spoiled children rue their stupidity later and deplore their lack of discipline. And we are now regretting the inanity that caused us to pinnacle Miss Nethersole and mar an actress who really owns exceptional talents and acute intelligence.

Miss Nethersole is now the pampered star who poses on the stage and off it, and who feels that she can do exactly as she chooses. She has sprouted the caprices of a grand opera artist—the whims of a Melba, the eccentricities of an Eames, and the egotism of a Calve. As they say in France, "Elle se fiche du monde." And in order to do that you must be established on a rock and not on a quicksand. Sarah can snap her fingers at the public, but is wise enough not to do so. Duse defiantly dictates her terms and conditions, but Duse is a rara avis, from whom such behavior is tolerable. Olga Nethersole, in the years to come, may, by dint of incessant work and unremitting endeavor, reach the dubious luxury of absolute independence. But I submit that she is not there yet, and London will acquaint her with a fact that New York is too indolent and too lethargically good-natured to emphasize.

At the Garden Theatre Miss Nethersole revived "Camille" last week—"Camille," the play that brought her a first piece of fortune, and that three years ago was approached timidly and painfully. Times had changed, however, and Miss Nethersole knew that she is now a full-fledged star, who made something like $40,000 in America last season—thanks to the kiss. "Camille" this time was a very absurd affair, that lasted until twenty-five minutes after midnight. No apologies were made, or even thought necessary. Miss Nethersole did the arrogant you've-got-to-see-me-star business, and calmly prolonged the entr'acts to an impossible extent. It was a case of Clara Morris all over again, but Miss Morris never toyed with her public until she was perfectly sure that she was able to do so.

Olga played "Camille" in the dreadful certainty that the public was hers. There were no misgivings. The box office—had it known what to expect—would surely have announced that "Miss Nethersole will play 'Camille' to-night, and do the death scene early to-morrow morning," but the box office was quite as surprised as the public.

The young actress, whom we have cherished so relentlessly, has developed affectations that will seriously interfere with her success in London. She has begun to make war on the English language. That sincerity of diction which we like to expect from English-speaking artists has entirely gone. Miss Nethersole has a stellar elocution of her own that it is almost impossible to comprehend. She swallows her words before they have been completely born, and her accent is something to marvel at. What the Londoners will think of our protegee it is hard to imagine. The general complaint is that America

OLGA NETHERSOLE AS CARMEN.

induces a loudness of tone and a deliberateness of utterance that generate irritation. Such criticism can never be written of Miss Nethersole. When you can understand her at all her English is so blighted by affectation that it is neither New York nor London. It defies classification. Olga is not yet great enough to be able to start a school of Nethersolian English. That may come anon. At present it should be her aim to interpret her playwrights by means of the splendid tongue to which she has been born.

The veteran knight-actor, Sir Henry Irving, is tolerated because genius has a comfortable little way of compelling you to accept it in a most eccentric guise. But even Irving is cautious. You remember Irving was warned. "Macbeth" was very soon shelved, and in subsequent productions the famous actor took especial pains with his English. Miss Nethersole, however, undoubtedly believes that her affected utterances in "The Wife of Scarli" stamped her with the impress of originality. The truth, however, will come to her later. I warn her that in London they will insist upon a clear and limpid enunciation.

I have already in my review of "The Wife of Scarli" commented upon the growing insincerity and artificiality of Miss Nethersole's methods. Yet I must say a few words more, as we are about to part. Miss Nethersole is realistic. There is no doubt about that. But extremes meet, and at the hither of her realism Olga touched something like this:

Scarli: Will you pass the mustard?

Mrs. Scarli (takes out her handkerchief, passes it wearily across her brow, and looks out of the window to see if nobody is coming. Then leans upon her elbows, gazes vacantly at a fly on the ceiling, buzzing north, south, east and west. She follows the fly carefully around, sighs and takes up the mustard pot): Yes.

Scarli: Shall Gemma go out with us?

Mrs. Scarli (seizes Gemma by the hand and glances hungrily in her face. Takes a blue ribbon and knots it carefully in Gemma's hair. Kneels on the floor and throws her arms around Gemma's neck. Mauls the child thoroughly, pinching her cheeks, caressing her ears, stroking her nose. Gets up and walks to the fireplace. Leans upon the mantel. Remembers coal, and puts some on fire. Poses effectively in the red glow, with a disconsolate look on face. Runs up to child, smiles wanly at her, and takes her hand): No.

Elaboration of stage business is an art. Mrs. Kendal showed us what a fine art it really is. The charm of Mrs. Kendal's early work was the manner in which she acted all the time, whether she was speaking or not. Mrs. Kendal was never idle on the stage. While waiting for her cues, she used to busy herself arranging flowers in a bowl, settling household decorations and keeping herself generally active. Miss Nethersole, however, in the frenzy of her ego-mania, forgets that anybody else has anything to do. She is impressed with the idea that the audience has not the faintest interest in any other member of the cast. She dresses up every "Yes" and "No" in such highly elaborate words that they reach us tardily. That is a mistake. We long to stick pins in her and stir her up. We are tempted to wish that she would tread on a tack and utter some loud, vif, sincere cry of real pain. We dread the catechism to which she is invariably subjected because of these long-drawn-out, ridiculously stretched answers. In fact, this Nethersolian affectation would be a magnificent subject for burlesque. I do not counsel any such proceeding just yet. A burlesque would injure Miss Nethersole more thoroughly than we want to see her injured, because it would teach her to think that her affectation was a specialty worth while cultivating. As a matter of fact, it is a specialty that must be stamped out. Life is too short for such nonsense. The drama is too earnest an entertainment to countenance these methods of torture and irritation.

The actress is also too eager to show us her back. Occasionally a dramatic effect may be secured by the back, because it allows you to imagine a passion of facial emotion so intense that it would not be advisable to look at it. But in "The Wife of Scarli" you grow to know Olga's back by heart. The trick lost all its value, because it was so frequently utilized. She gave us allopathic doses of back until the very fit of her dress was familiar to us. Now, as a matter of fact, the traditions of the stage insist that an actor and actress shall face the audience. And a very good tradition it is. Modern improvements have, however, sanctioned a discriminate use of the back—as a little dramatic trick, and nothing else. Miss Nethersole probably learned the back-to-the-audience business from Mrs. Kendal, whose disciple she undoubtedly is; but Miss Nethersole must remember that Mrs. Kendal has a very nice, young, sleek back, that she used to wear decollete, and that invariably proved to be very amusing, because it seemed to say that Madge was really not as old as you had been led to believe.

Miss Nethersole is young, and there is not the least need for her to emphasize her back for at least fifteen years. It is stupid, and it is unpardonable. It is nothing more than a confession of weakness, and there is not the least art in it when carried to excess. This is another affectation that must be instantly nipped in the bud. After seeing "The Wife of Scarli" I carried away no impressions save that I had seen an actress religiously standing for the greater part of the evening with her back to the audience.

One more comment, and I have finished with Olga—as she has finished with me. I want to ask her to respond to curtain calls—if she must respond—cheerfully and gratefully. They are nice things to get—are curtain calls. It is Miss Nethersole's practice to appear before us—when we ask to see her as the woman removed from the artist—acting more frantically than ever. The curtain goes up, and on she comes, drooping, dramatically exhausted, picturesquely limp and wan, panting like a dying duck in a thunderstorm and thoroughly artificial. Could anything be more senseless? A woman who has played "Camille" season in and season out could not possibly feel as utterly emotionnee at the end of each performance as Miss Nethersole wants us to believe.

It is my fervent opinion that Camille is one of the healthiest roles that an actress can play. Camilles fatten and grow hale and hearty. There is a sort of tonic in the work, strange though it may seem. If Camille were really so utterly played out at the end of each fifth act, she would die. No woman on earth could stand the strain.

When an audience summons an artist before the curtain, the audience is curious to see that artist in propria personne. "You have held us enthralled by your acting," says the audience. "Now come forth, and let us see what you look like when you are not acting. Let us see you and thank you for the capital entertainment you have given us."

Miss Nethersole does not understand this. She comes forth to her friends and admirers—neither grateful nor happy—but saturated with the affectations of her own egotism. Such a dreary looking creature is she at the end of an act that you feel it is almost inhuman on your part to ask her to continue. "We'll go home, Olga, as you

look so completely miserable," you are almost prompted to say. "We'll come some other night, when you are feeling better." Miss Nethersole should take a look at Minnie Maddern before she sails for Europe, and note the manner in which this little genius responds to applause—without any sickly airs or affected nonsense.

Miss Nethersole has had a nice, comfortable and profitable time of it in America.

She has grown impossible of late simply because she believed—and we allowed her to believe—that she was quite the most potent attraction in our midst. The time for such nonsense has passed. Miss Nethersole's holiday is over. The hour for earnest work has arrived—as it arrives for us all sooner or later.

ALAN DALE.

What the Grave of Mother Eve Looks Like and What a Newly Translated Document Says About Her.

Two events have lately directed the attention of European students of the Bible to the subject of Adam and Eve. One of these was the recent translation of a curious old book known as Dutripon's Concordance of the Bible.

This recent translation has placed in the hands of scholars a mass of information in regard to the children of Adam and Eve, and it has done much to clear up the mystery as to how the human race got fairly started from the original single pair. A still more interesting event has been the clearing from rubbish and encumbering vines of the tomb of Eve, which is now one of the extraordinary sights pointed out to travellers in Mecca.

This tomb is in the church yard of Djeddah. There is an enclosure about 180 feet in length containing two small chapels, one at the entrance to the space and the other in the middle.

The latter contains a great block of stone, and in this the grave of Eve was dug. Its dimensions are indicated on the surface of the rock by a wall thirty inches high.

The grave of Eve is now empty. It is not known when her body was removed. But immemorial tradition has connected her name with this tomb. No faithful Mohammedan doubts for a moment that in this identical spot the great mother of the human race was laid to rest.

Eve's husband, however, is missing. Nobody knows where Adam was buried.

The tradition asserts that this mysterious first woman was created, as was Eve, out of a rib, and thus it accounts for the fact that there is an equal number of ribs in each side of man's anatomy. Lilith or Lilis was the name of Eve's first wife of Adam.

In some mysterious way she fell from grace without impairing the innocence of her husband, and the tradition so long preserved among the rabbis is that she was immediately ranked among the fallen angels and has ever since exercised an inveterate hatred of all women and children. Up till a late period she was held in great dread lest she should destroy male children previous to circumcision.

After that her power over them ceased. Under the ancient ceremonies of the rabbis, when this rite was performed they were in the habit of pronouncing the names of Adam and Eve, with a command to Lilith to depart.

Far more interesting, however, are the facts recently brought to light in the course of the translation of ancient records. These contain many traditions about Eve which had been handed down from generation to generation in immemorial times.

Dutripon's Concordance has disclosed that St. Chrysostom was the repository of many interesting facts about our first parents. Thus St. Chrysostom affirms that it was a tradition among the Jews in his time that Cain married his sister Ripha, and that jealousy over a sister was the cause of the quarrel between Cain and Abel.

Eve, says this Concordance, gave birth to twins every year for thirty years, always a boy and a girl. This is partly borne out by Josephus. He says:

"Now Adam, who was the first man and made out of the earth, after Abel was slain and Cain fled away on account of his murder, was solicitous for posterity and had a vehement desire for children, he being two hundred and thirty years old, after which time he lived another seven hundred and then died. He had indeed many other children, the number of which was estimated at thirty-three sons and twenty-three daughters."

These sisters and brothers are supposed to have intermarried. St. Chrysostom, according to this new translation of Dutripon's Concordance, says:

"Though afterward forbidden, the tendency of divine legislation being always in the direction of enlarging rather than restricting the family circle of prohibited relationship, the union of brothers and sisters was at first clearly indispensable if the race was to multiply outward from a common stock."

Even in much later times and among very civilized nations such alliances were not considered incestuous. The Athenian law, for instance, made it imperative to marry the sister if she had not found a husband at a certain age.

Abraham married his half-sister, Sarah. Moses, the great law-giver, was the offspring of a marriage which he later interdicted as unholy.

Renan translated the Apocalypse of Adam, a Syriac manuscript to be found in the Vatican, and found evidence that Cain and Abel quarrelled about a sister. He says:

"After Adam knew his wife, Eve, she gave birth to two sons and two daughters, Calmana and Lebora, the first being twin to Cain, the second to Abel. Adam desired that each of his sons should marry the twin of his brother. Cain was discontented with arrangements which gave the more beautiful woman to his brother, and this was really the cause of the hatred between the two brothers."

The evidence that the sons and daughters of Adam and Eve intermarried is further substantiated by Josephus. He says:

"Adam and Eve had two sons. The elder of them was named Cain, which name, when it is interpreted, signifies 'a possession.' The younger was Abel, which signifies 'sorrow.'

"They had also daughters. Now the two sons were pleased with different courses of life; for Abel, the younger, was a lover of righteousness, and, believing that God was present at all his actions, he excelled in virtue; and his employment was that of a shepherd. But Cain was not only very wicked in other respects, but was wholly intent upon getting; and he first contrived to plough the ground."

Josephus's description of the murder turns upon the ordinarily accepted theory of Cain's jealousy of God's preference for Abel's offerings. The same authority goes on to tell how Cain was cast out of the land, together with his wife, "who was his sister," and how, after travelling over many countries, they built a city named Nod. Cain introduced a change in the simple way of living, with which men had been content until then.